

Vandenberg blasts out 20th Century launching three rockets in nine days



TECH. SGT. ROBERT HARDGRAVES

BY STAFF SGT. REBECCA BONILLA
30th Space Wing Public Affairs

■ During a month packed with Y2K preparations and Christmas shopping, Team Vandenberg launched three rockets in nine days, it's busiest mission season of the year.

The base's stepped-up operations tempo began Dec. 12 with the launch of a Titan II rocket carrying a Defense Meteorological Satellite Program weather satellite at 9:38 a.m.

Five days later on Dec. 18, members of the 30th Space Wing, NASA and Lockheed Martin, teamed together to launch an Atlas IIAS rocket at 10:57 a.m.

The rocket carried NASA's Terra satellite. Terra is the flagship in a new series of satellites designed to collect data which will enable scientists to study the interaction between the four spheres of the Earth's systems – the oceans, lands, atmosphere and biosphere.

"I congratulate members of Team Vandenberg for the success of the Terra mission," said Col. Steve Lanning, 30th Space Wing commander. "The 30th Space Wing is proud to partner with our industry and civil space partners of Lockheed Martin Astronautics and NASA. Today, our people showed why Team Vandenberg is the world's best spaceport." Lanning was also the spacelift commander for the Terra mission.

A quick two days after the Atlas IIAS launch,

Team Vandenberg launched a Taurus rocket carrying two satellites into polar orbit at 11:13 p.m. Dec. 20.

The payload of the Taurus included the Korean Multi-Purpose satellite and Active Cavity Irradiance Monitor satellite.

"This launch serves as the millennial capstone for a very successful and productive year for Team Vandenberg," said Col. Charlie Phillips, spacelift commander for the Taurus launch and 30th Space Wing vice commander. "It signifies the cooperative spirit the 30th Space Wing shares with our corporate and international partners."

The KOMPSAT carries three primary instruments, including an electro-optical camera which will help produce digital elevation maps of Korea, an ocean scanning multi-spectral imaging instrument to study biological oceanography and a space physics sensor that will study the effects of radiation on microelectronics and the characteristics of electrons in the ionosphere.

The ACRIMSAT will study total light energy from the sun, known as total solar irradiance.

Additionally, 18 families watched the cremated remains of their loved ones carried into orbit aboard the final stage of the rocket.

Along with the rigorous launch schedule, Team Vandenberg also hosted more than 1,500 visitors from across the country and around the world who came to watch the last three launches of this century.

The Atlas IIAS lifts off from Space Launch Complex-3 East at 10:57 a.m., Dec. 18.

BAH rates change; rate protection prevents loss

■ PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — Office of the Secretary of Defense staff recently announced the new Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH, rates, which took effect Jan. 1 and apply to all military services.

"The good news is the rates for people living in high-cost areas are increasing," said Maj. Justo Rivera, chief of Air Force Pay and Allowance Policy. For example, rates for personnel assigned to the Denver area gener-

ally increased, some grades as high as 21 percent.

On the other hand, about 60 percent of our Air Force installations are in relatively lower-cost areas and over time airmen assigned there will experience BAH decreases – however, the lower rates will not apply to airmen who presently live in areas with decreases as they are rate protected, according to Rivera.

Under this protection, if BAH rates

decreased, members' current allowances remain unchanged; if the housing allowances increased, members will receive the higher amount.

"Many AFSPC installations are located in relatively lower cost areas and the new BAH rates reflect those lower housing costs. The new rates are based on a very thorough survey – nearly 400 different locations were studied. Each location profile was a compilation of 29 different factors –

such as median rent, average utilities and insurance, with data gathered from Housing Referral Offices, newspapers and real estate agents," said Col. Jim Burling, AFSPC's deputy director of personnel.

Burling said AFSPC members assigned to Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont; Minot Air Force Base, N.D.; and F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., will generally experience the See BAH on Page 11

CComment



Col. Steve Lanning
Commander,
30th Space Wing

606-7850

Commander's Action Line

As the wing commander, my primary focus is on the mission and I believe that our mission success will be based on how well we care for our people on and off the job.

The Action Line is your direct link to me. It provides an avenue for you to voice your concerns, share constructive ideas or give your fellow base members a pat on the back. The Action Line is not a replacement for using the chain of command.

Callers are asked to leave their name and contact number in case more information is needed.

I want Vandenberg to continue to be the best Air Force base in the world. Working together, it will be.

Q My problem concerns the commissary. I wonder why every time I go in there, I get over-charged for something?

I've tried talking to Mr. Burnstein about it, and he maintains that they do the best they can in keeping up with changes. But they can't get them done because of the lack of personnel. I don't understand why this base has this problem when I could go to a civilian store and never be over-charged.

A Thank-you for your question. Our normal price changes consist of 4,000 price tags for the first of the month and approximately 2,000 for the middle of the month. Occasionally, some price tags have been inadvertently passed over.

The Vandenberg Commissary has currently established new procedures to verify shelf prices and promotional display prices. These procedures are executed twice a month immediately after the new price changes are completed. The new procedures are known as "Point of Sale Modernization" and are faster and more efficient than the old DeCA Interim Business System.

Additionally, a point of contact has been permanently assigned to this tasking to ensure its accuracy and

completion. The point of contact for this matter is William Franco at 734-3354 Ext. 725.

Q I'm the wife of a retired Air Force master sergeant and also a retired customer service manager in the cashier's office at this commissary. I clearly disagree with your answer in the Nov. 12 issue of the *Space & Missile Times* regarding commissary concerns.

There is no comparison between checking IDs at the base exchange and the commissary. First, prices at the base exchange are higher than the commissary because they make a profit. The commissary sells products for the same price as what they pay for them with only a 5-percent surcharge added for overhead.

The mini-comm is too small to have an ID checker at the door. Customers are supposed to show their IDs at the beginning of an order. The baggers know which customers have IDs, especially when they put customers' groceries in cars and are asked to keep orders separate.

A Thank you for your concerns on checking ID cards at the entrance to the commissary. A news release dated November 1999 on

The Answers

the new policy on checking ID cards was sent out. The changes in commissary entry identification checks and visitor policy were recently approved by the Department of Defense and briefed to military installation commanders.

The new policy, recommended by the DoD Commissary Operating Board, standardizes authorized patrons to enter commissary stores. Visitors will not be allowed to purchase commissary goods.

"The new visitors policy allows access to the benefit for patrons who otherwise might be inhibited from using what is rightly theirs," said DeCA Chief Executive Officer John McGowan.

For example, shoppers have asked DeCA if they could bring in relatives visiting from out of town, rather than making them wait in the car. DeCA also heard from military spouses who found it difficult to use their commissary when they provided home day care for children who are not military dependents.

Only visitors accompanied by an authorized shopper are allowed to be in a store. Commissary officers have authority to "spot check" for unauthorized persons in their stores and to have installation authorities remove them.

Anyone suspecting abuse of the commissary privilege can call the installation authorities and those who

abuse their shopping privilege can lose it.

Q I was recently informed that we're scheduled to move. I live on Oceanview Street. We're scheduled to move after the first of the year. My husband is a senior noncommissioned officer, and we were advised that there are currently no senior NCO units available. We don't want to move to east housing, and we don't want to move completely off base.

My question is, will we or will we not be allowed to move up into the new houses that they're building by California Avenue by the front gate? If not, where are they planning on putting the senior NCOs that they have houses for?

A Thanks for the call. Our current plan is to use our existing senior NCO housing inventory to the fullest extent possible, to include East Housing, before the new junior NCO homes must be used. If we cannot satisfy our relocation requirements using the existing senior NCO housing inventory, then some of the new homes in phase six currently under construction will be offered to the families remaining in the tear-down phase seven area.

Congratulations to communications experts for outstanding production

DEAR COLONEL LANNING,

Your folks created a hit! *The Call to Kosovo* video premiered in Los Angeles at the Air Force Association Space Symposium and was a highlight of the event; people are still talking about it! Please pass my thanks to Capt. Bruce Bender, Tech. Sgt. Charles Latham, Tech. Sgt. William Clark, Staff Sgt. Gary Burdett and Airman 1st Class Channa Johnson for another job well done.

They're a first class act and should be proud of their work.

The video serves several purposes. It portrays our successes in Kosovo, educates the military and civilian community on what we bring to the fight and it's entertaining. We couldn't ask for more. Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,
RICHARD MYERS
GENERAL, USAF
COMMANDER

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Base inspector general explains IG system

By LT. COL. R.K. NORVELL

30th Space Wing Inspector General

The installation inspector general for Vandenberg recently moved to room A-100 in the headquarters building, 10577. So now might be a good time to reintroduce the IG Complaints Program to the base populace and clarify how it's used.

I am the new base inspector general. Master Sgt. Miles Dutton is the deputy IG.

The purpose of the IG Complaints Program is to investigate possible violations of standards and to provide redress or appeal where none already exists.

Air Force military and civilian members have a duty to promptly report fraud, waste and abuse or gross mismanagement; a violation of law, policy, procedures or regulation; an injustice; abuse of authority, inappropriate conduct or misconduct; and deficiencies to an appropriate supervisor or commander, an IG or other appropriate inspector, or through an established grievance channel.

Complainants should attempt to resolve FWA issues and personal complaints at the lowest possible level using command channels before addressing them to a higher level or the

IG. The immediate supervisory command chain can often resolve complaints more quickly and effectively than a higher level not familiar with the situation.

The IG system should be used when referral to the command chain would be futile, or there is fear of reprisal. The IG ensures the concerns of Air Force active-duty, reserve and guard members, civilian employees, family members, retirees, and the best interests of the Air Force are addressed through objective fact-finding.

If you've done all you can through functional and command channels, give us a call at 606-2183 or 605-6366 to set up an appointment, so we can get the specifics of the complaint and process the right paperwork.

Air Force Instruction 90-301 specifies how to file IG complaints and what is appropriate for IG action. The IG maintains confidentiality of all parties mentioned in a complaint as much as possible while investigating it. Sometimes during interviews, to get to the root of the problem, it still may become apparent who is involved. However, everyone interviewed is required not to discuss anything about the case outside investigation channels.

Nothing can happen to an individual for going to the IG. Reprisal for going to the IG is a very serious offense and

generates its own IG investigation if it occurs.

An individual may make an anonymous complaint, but if there's not enough information in the initial complaint, we have no recourse but to dismiss it, since we can't get clarification. Also, the results of the investigation cannot be passed to the complainant.

What happens to the subject (the person complained about) of a complaint depends on the outcome of the investigation. If the allegations are unsubstantiated, nothing happens.

If they are substantiated, the results of the investigation are passed to command channels for appropriate action. The IG will provide a final response to the complainant after the case is closed.

If the complainant isn't satisfied with the findings of the investigation or corrective action taken, that by itself does not constitute sufficiency for additional IG review. However, if the complainant has specific reasons for believing the original IG investigation was not valid or adequate, or has additional information that was not previously considered, there are provisions to have the next higher level IG review the case.

The IG system is here for you to use. So when it's appropriate, please use it.

TRICARE answers frequently asked questions

■ Here is the first in a series of frequently asked questions regarding TRICARE benefits. For additional information call the TRICARE Service Center at 1-800-242-6788, or the Vandenberg Military Treatment Facility Beneficiary Services Office at 606-6785.

What is my priority for care in the MTF?

By law, priority for care at the MTF will be based on the following criteria:

- ◆ Active duty personnel.
- ◆ Active duty family members enrolled in TRICARE Prime with the MTF.
- ◆ Retirees, survivors and their family members enrolled in Prime with the MTF.
- ◆ Active duty family members not enrolled in Prime .
- ◆ Retirees, survivors and their family members not enrolled in Prime.
- ◆ Non-enrolled people eligible for military health care will be seen at military hospitals and clinics on a space-available basis.

'Tiger teeth'



"Tiger teeth" and arm barriers pop up today, in front of the headquarters building, 10577.

News

BRIEFS

CHIEFS' GROUP HOLDS 2000 CHIEF INDUCTION CEREMONY

■ The Vandenberg Chiefs' Group will host the 2000 Chiefs' Induction Ceremony Saturday at the Pacific Coast Club. A social hour will begin at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. The dress is semi-formal. For more information, call Chief Master Sgt. Eileen Berning at 606-0420.

SPEAKERS BRIEF EXPEDITIONARY AEROSPACE FORCE PLANS

■ The Expeditionary Aerospace Force implementation plan will be briefed by guest speakers Monday in Sesto Auditorium. Family members are welcome to attend. Base members should plan to attend one of the following briefings: 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. For more information, call 1st Lt. Patricia Teran-Dick at 606-0345.

COMBAT ARMS FIRING RANGE OFF LIMITS

■ The 30th Combat Arms Firing Range Complex, located off San Antonio Road West, is off limits to all unauthorized people. Danger signs are posted around the hazardous area of the range complex. For entry, call the combat arms maintenance section at 606-6130 or 606-3745.

AIR FORCE SERGEANTS' ASSOCIATION MEETS AT PCC

■ The Air Force Sergeants' Association will hold its first membership meeting of the new year Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. in the Pacific Coast Club. All active-duty military members, retirees and family members are welcome to attend. For more information, call Tech. Sgt. Troy

Weigel at 606-0285 or Master Sgt. Mike Zirkle at 734-3162.

UTAH GATE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

■ Construction is complete on the Utah Gate. Base people may now use the gate to enter or leave the base every day from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

SELF-HELP STORE HAS FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR BASE HOMES

■ Under a recent contract to install fire extinguishers in all base homes, some houses were missed. Members whose homes do not have a fire extinguisher can pick one up at the housing maintenance self-help store. Extinguishers should be installed in the utility room 60 inches from the floor and on a wall with no plumbing, electrical outlets or circuit breaker boxes. For more information, call the housing maintenance office at 734-5586.

MAINE AIR NATIONAL GUARD HAS TRADITIONAL GUARD VACANCIES

■ There are vacancies in the Maine Air National Guard. South Portland Guard Station has traditional guard positions for people leaving active duty. Openings are available for people with the following Air Force Specialty Codes: 2E1X1, 2E1X3, 2E6X1, 2E6X2, 2T3X1, 3C0X1, 3C1X1, 3C2X1 and 3E0X2. Cross training is available. For more information, call Master Sgt. Tom Breault at DSN 698-7904 or 800-549-9197.

JUNIOR ENLISTED CAN VOICE CONCERNS THROUGH COUNCIL

■ A Junior Enlisted Club Advisory Council is scheduled for Jan. 18 at 1 p.m. in the Pacific Coast Club. All base members E-1 through E-4 are welcome to attend to voice concerns on club issues.

Members in military housing can use AF Form 332 for home upgrades

By LOU GILLESS

Military Family Housing

■ The Air Force Form 332 is used for several different functions in Military Family Housing.

It may be used to request work to be completed by the 30th Civil Engineer Squadron or by contract. It can be used to request trees be trimmed or removed and to initiate self-help projects in and around homes.

To process a request, members need to first complete blocks 1 through 14 of either the AF Form 332 or blocks 1 through 11 on the 30th Space Wing Form 35. Then they need to deliver it to the housing office, facilities section in building 13001.

Residents can also visit the housing office and complete either form using the personal computer that has been set up for that purpose.

When housing staff receive a request, the customer service representative will ensure it is processed correctly. Maintenance and repair work is done by 30th CES members and contractors, tree trimming and removal is done by contractors and self-help work is completed by the resident.

If the work is to be done by the squadron, a work request number will be assigned and entered into a computer program for tracking purposes. If it is to be completed by contract, either a project is established or the AF Form 332 is forwarded to the service contracts section for further processing.

If the work a resident has identified is tree removal or trimming, the request will be forwarded to the contractor, requesting a proposed cost for the work. In addition, the request is also forwarded to the base environmental section for approval, prior to initiating the work. If the base environmental section approves the request and the proposed cost is acceptable, service contracts staff will inform the contractor

to schedule and proceed with the work.

Residents should keep in mind that most requests for tree removal are not approved unless the trees are causing damage to a structure, sidewalks, or driveways.

Any work that housing occupants want to accomplish in their homes or yards, must first be authorized. To

receive the authorization to proceed with any self-help project, members should first submit the AF Form 332, identifying the type work to be accomplished.

After the form has been reviewed, residents will be notified that their form has been processed and is ready for pick-up. Some of

the self help projects that require prior approval before the work is completed are: installing a satellite dish, painting interior rooms a different color; installing a fence; developing a garden or landscaping a lawn.

Members who request a fence project, must submit a diagram of the house, the proposed location of the fence and gate, dimensions of the fence, and type of material to be used.

Some work may require a work clearance permit, AF Form 103. For instance, if the work included the installation of a 4 inch by 4 inch post for a satellite dish in the new housing areas, a digging permit is required because all utilities are under ground.

To prevent damage and for residents' safety, a work clearance permit is required.

Anyone who wants to complete this type of work should stop by the Vandenberg Housing Management Office in building 13001 and submit the appropriate forms. Houses are meant to be enjoyed to the fullest extent possible! Call the housing office at 606-3434 with questions.

Base housing residents need AF Forms 332 to:
Install a satellite dish,
paint interior rooms,
install a fence,
install ceiling fans,
develop a garden,
landscape a lawn,
hang a different door.

Family advocacy provides ...

New Parents Support Program

By STAFF SGT. ANDREW LEONHARD

30th Space Wing Public Affairs

■ The new year is here and with the arrival of newborn babies, many new families will begin and still others will grow. Vandenberg has several programs available on base to assist new and experienced parents.

One of those programs, the New Parents Support Program, is centered on educating and preparing new parents to handle pregnancy, birth and infant care through the first three years.

The New Parents Support Program is designed to help military members cut down on family worries so they can concentrate more on mission readiness, said Nancy Sias, Family Advocacy nurse specialist from the 30th Medical Group. Sias has been a member of Team Vandenberg for the past six years.

Seven years ago, the Air Force looked at the young families that were on TDY or PCSing and realized they

didn't have any support, Sias said.

"When the program first started here, it had four nurses. Now there are more than 90 nurses involved around the world," Sias said.

Several factors are considered to determine which base members qualify for the program, Sias said.

A few of the qualifying families are expectant or new parents, single parents, parents with no local support or family to come and help, and parents frequently deployed or on a remote tour, Sias said.

Parents can pickup free books and handouts on pregnancy, childbirth, baby care, parenting classes, home visits, education, and support through this program. Funding for the program is through the Air Force Surgeon General's office.

Sias said she sometimes sees expectant fathers who are concerned with their wife's unpredictable mood swings.

Often, fathers are excited about being first-time dads but they're also scared about the new responsibilities that fatherhood presents. Through the New Parents Support Program, Sias can counsel and assist parents by giving them books and other information to help them cope with any added stress.

"The main focus of the program is education and prevention," Sias said. "I like to use the saying, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Sias speaks highly about the volunteers and other people from the Family Advocacy office who assist her with the program.

"I've been blessed with people that God puts in my path to help me with the program," stated Sias.

As new families begin or other families grow during this next year, the New Parents Support Program will be here to guide and help them along the way.

Family Advocacy has many programs for base parents

**The Single Parents Support Group,
Operation Baby Launch,
Bear Essentials Parenting Classes,
Baby Meet,
Moms to New Moms.**

Information on these programs is updated weekly in the Community Calendar section of the *Space & Missile Times*.

For details on these and other programs call Nancy Sias at 606-5338 or Linda Bastine at 606-9958.



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS SUZANNE JENKINS

Giddy up

Katharyn Scheller gets a pony ride behind the base exchange with a little help from her dad, Gerd, (left) and Tammy Shrump (right) of the Enlisted Wives' Club. The EWC provided pony rides during the holiday season in an attempt to renew interest in the club.

Learn warning signs during cold, flu season

BY CAPT. BRENDA MORGAN
30th Medical Group

■ Is it a cold or the flu? A cold and the flu, also called influenza, are alike in many ways. But the flu can sometimes lead to more serious problems, like the lung disease pneumonia. You usually do not have to call your doctor right away if you have signs of a cold or flu.

You should call your doctor in these situations: Your symptoms get worse, your symptoms last a long time (more than five days for children or 10 days for adults), or after feeling a little better, you develop signs of a more serious problem (high fever, chest pain, shortness of breath or coughing with thick, yellow-green mucus). Almost all people who want to lower their chance of getting the flu can get a flu shot. Flu shots are most important for people over 65, nursing home patients, children over six months old with certain health problems (asthma, diabetes, HIV or heart disease), and people who are often around elderly or those with health problems.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, high (102-104 F); lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches, pains	Slight	Usual; often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Quite mild	Can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Early and prominent
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can become severe
Complications	Sinus congestion or earache	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening
Prevention	Wash hands often; avoid people with colds; clean surfaces you touch with germ-killing disinfectant	Annual flu shot
Treatment	Only temporary relief of symptoms	Only temporary relief of symptoms



STAFF SGT. PAM T. AUBMAN

Ho Ho Ho

Base commanders drove the Ho Ho Wagon Christmas eve and delivered cookies and candy to base members who worked during the holiday.

Air Force turns focus to recruiting, retention

By SENIOR AIRMAN A.J. BOSKER

Air Force Print News

■ WASHINGTON — The first two Air Force recruits of the new millennium raised their right hands during a special enlistment ceremony led by Undersecretary of the Air Force Carol DiBattiste at the Baltimore Military Entrance Processing Station Jan. 3.

"Today was a very special day," said DiBattiste. "We not only put the first two people into the United States Air Force for the new millennium but also initiated the Air Force's new focus on recruiting and retention for the year 2000."

The new initiative is designed to overcome the biggest challenge the Air Force has faced in recruiting in 20 years. The Air Force goal for 1999 was 33,800 new enlistees, but the service missed that mark by 1,732.

A key aspect of the initiative to meet the service's goal of 34,000 enlisted recruits for this year is adding more recruiters. By March the service will have 1,209 Air Force recruiters throughout the nation, and plans to increase that to 1,500 by March 2001. This time last year there were only 800 Air Force recruiters across America.

At a recent recruiting summit, officials also developed more than 120 initiatives in four major areas to improve recruiting, according to the undersecretary. First, the service plans to offer more incentives for recruiters in order to attract the best people to become and remain recruit-

ers. Other initiatives include increasing paid advertising, increasing training for recruiters, and enhancing bonuses in hard-to-fill skills such as mechanical aptitude areas.

DiBattiste also said that throughout the year Air Force leaders will meet with educators, civic groups and local leaders to explain what the Air Force does for our nation, and the outstanding opportunities and benefits of serving our country in the Air Force.

With fewer military bases around the nation and a smaller population of people who have served in the military, she said it is very important to tell Americans about the challenges and rewards of a military enlistment.

Speaking to airmen in the audience and throughout the service, DiBattiste encouraged all Air Force members to tell others about the Air Force way of life.

"Every single person in the Air Force is a recruiter," she said. "In fact, there is a program in the Air Force called 'We Are All Recruiters,' and I challenge everyone to recruit at least one person for our Air Force this year."

"The Air Force has so much to offer young people — an ability to contribute to the best mission, to be a part of something great, and to make a difference for their country while gaining valuable skills that they will have for the rest of their lives," she said. "The Air Force truly is a great place to be."

Volunteer tax assistants set to help file by April 17

By CAPT. DENNIS KAW
30th Space Wing Legal Office

■ Happy New Year! Among other things, this means that the tax-filing deadline is fast approaching.

This year's tax-filing deadline is April 17. To avoid last minute confusion and to promote quick refunds, the Legal Office strongly recommends that you use the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance services available to all military members, retirees, and their qualified dependants.

VITA representatives are military

members who are trained and certified tax-preparers volunteering with guidance from the legal office. They can help you prepare and file your personal taxes, free of charge, directly with the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board. All federal and California personal tax forms will be available at the legal office. Listed below is a list of websites to download tax forms and information from most states and the IRS.

This year's tax season brings about

some new changes, including: a \$500 per child tax credit, a \$1,500 student loan interest credit, the phase-out of Individual Retirement Account credits, an augmentation of "Combat Zone" classification, broader allowances for medical care expenses of dependants, and the classification of military members as being covered under an employer retirement plan.

To use all of these changes, you should get in contact with a VITA representative by mid-January to begin your tax preparation.

Direct filing through VITA is the best way to ensure that your taxes are done properly and promptly. Using the free VITA service can save you an average of \$65 in tax preparation and filing fees. A list of VITA representatives will be published in the *Space & Missile Times* in the next few weeks and will be available through the legal office. Also, look for helpful tax tips in future *Space & Missile Times* editions. For more information contact the Legal Office, 605-6220 or 605-6207.

IRS web page gives information for upcoming tax season

■ The Internal Revenue Service's web site, at <http://www.irs.ustreas.gov>, gives tax information on various tax topics.

This week's frequently asked questions address some of the tax credits available to people.

Question: Can I get the earned income credit?

Answer: You may be able to take this credit if a child didn't live with you and you earned less than \$10,200. You may also be able to take this credit if a child lived with you and you earned less than \$26,928 (with one child), or less than \$30,580 (more than one child). Other rules apply. For details, see Tax Topic 601, Earned Income Credit (EIC), or Publication 596, Earned Income Credit.

Question: Can I claim the child and dependent care credit?

Answer: If you paid someone to care for your dependent under age 13 or your disabled dependent or spouse so that you could work or look for work, you may be able claim the credit for child and dependent care expenses. For specific information how to qualify for this credit refer to Tax Topic 602, Child and Dependent Credit, or Publication 503, Child and Dependent Care Expenses.

Question: Can I get the credit for the elderly or the disabled?

Answer: Generally, if you were age 65 or older or disabled and your income and nontaxable social security or other nontaxable pension are below specified amounts, you be able to take this credit. For more details, refer to Tax Topic 603, Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled, or Publication 524, Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled.

Question: What are advance earned income credit payments?

Answer: If you expect to qualify for the earned income credit in 2000, you may be able to start getting part of the credit with your pay in 2000, instead of waiting until you your 2000 tax return in 2001. This is called the advance earned income credit or AEIC.

To get part of the credit with your pay, you must have at least one qualifying child, and meet certain other conditions. You cannot get the AEIC if you do not expect to have a qualifying child, even if you will be eligible to claim the earned income credit on your 2000 return. To see if you qualify, see Form W-5, Earned Credit Advance Payment Certificate, or Publication 596, Earned Income Credit.

State tax offices set up to answer members’ tax questions

STATE	E-MAIL ADDRESS	PHONE	STATE	E-MAIL ADDRESS	PHONE
AL	www.ador.state.al.us	(334)242-2677	NE	www.nol.org/revenue	(800)742-7474
AK	www.revenue.state.ak.us/forms/index	(907)465-2320	NV	www.taxaccountpros.com/	(702)486-2300
AZ	www.revenue.state.az.us/98forms	(602)255-3381	NH	webster.state.nh.us/revenue/forms/taxforms	(603)271-2192
AR	www.state.ar.us/dfa/taxes/index	(501) 682-1100	NJ	www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/forms	(800)323-4400
CA	www.ftb.ca.gov/forms	(800)852-5711	NM	www.state.nm.us/tax/trd_form	(505)841-6200
CO	www.state.co.us/gov_dir/revenue_dir/stateforms	(303)232-2414	NY	www.tax.state.ny.us/Forms	(800)462-8100
CT	www.state.ct.us/drs/forms/forms	(860)297-5962	NC	www.dor.state.nc.us/DOR/forms/	(919)715-0397
DE	www.state.de.us/revenue/taxforms	(302)577-8200	ND	www.state.nd.us/taxdpt/forms/forms	(701)328-3450
FL	sun6.dms.state.fl.us/dor/forms	(850)922-9645	OH	www.state.oh.us/tax/tabforms	(800)282-1782
GA	www.state.ga.us/Departments/DOR	(404)656-4293	OK	information not found	
HI	www.state.hi.us/tax/tax	(800)887-8974	OR	www.dor.state.or.us/forms	(800)356-4222
ID	www2.state.id.us/tax/forms	(800)972-7660	PA	www.revenue.state.pa.us/forms/index	(888)728-2937
IL	www.revenue.state.il.us/taxforms	(800)732-8866	RI	www.tax.state.ri.us/form/form	(401)222-1111
IN	www.state.in.us/dor/forms/forms	(317)486-5103	SC	www.dor.state.sc.us/tax/forms	(800)768-3676
IA	www.state.ia.us/government/drf/1998/	(515)281-7239	SD	www.state.sd.us/state/executive/revenue/forms	(605)773-7222
KS	www.ink.org/public/kdor/taxforms	(785)296-4937	TN	information not found	(615)741-4465
KY	www.state.ky.us/agencies/revenue/taxforms	(502)564-4581	TX	www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms	(800)248-4093
LA	www.rev.state.la.us/TaxForm	(225)925-7532	UT	www.tax.ex.state.ut.us/CurrentPackX/currPakX	(801)526-9390
ME	janus.state.me.us/revenue/forms	(207)624-7894	VT	www.state.vt.us/tax/adobe4	(802)828-2865
MD	www.comp.state.md.us/forms	(410)260-7951	VA	www.state.va.us/tax/taxforms	(804)236-2760
MA	www.state.ma.us/dor/forms/taxform	(617)887-6367	WA	dor.wa.gov/index.asp?//wadorfrm	(800)647-7706
MI	mel.lib.mi.us/michigan/mitaxforms	(800)367-6263	D.C.	information not found	(202)727-6170
MN	www.taxes.state.mn.us/98forms	(800)652-9094	WV	www.state.wv.us/taxrev/forms	(800)982-8297
MS	www.mstc.state.ms.us	(601)923-7800	WI	www.dor.state.wi.us/html/formpub	(608)266-1961
MO	www.dor.state.mo.us/tax/redesign	(800)877-6881	WY	revenue.state.wy.us/excise/Tax/forms	(307)883-3005
MT	www.mt.gov	(406)752-6636	IRS	www.irs.ustreas.gov	(800)829-1040

Cohen adds 'don't harass' to DoD homosexual policy

BY LINDA D. KOZARYN AND
JIM GARAMONE

American Forces Press Service

■ WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary William Cohen has expanded the description of the "don't ask, don't tell" homosexual policy to "don't ask, don't tell, don't harass."

Defense leaders are determined to make the 'don't ask, don't tell' policy on homosexuals in the military work. "I think it's an over generalization to say it's not working," Cohen said during a recent trip to Italy and the Balkans. "What we need to do is make sure it's successfully implemented."

The recent Department of Defense actions are designed to stress the "don't harass" portion of the policy. The actions, announced in August,

tasked the services to incorporate in their training stronger language against harassment. "Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation is wrong, just as it's wrong on the basis of race or religion or whether a person is male or female," said Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon during a news conference.

One DOD memo requires that DOD guidance on the homosexual policy be "effectively disseminated to all levels of command" and be made part of training programs for law enforcement personnel, commanders and supervisors. The memo also requires the instruction be incorporated into recruit training and for service members to attend refresher training thereafter.

DeCA changes visitor policy

BY ARMY STAFF SGT.

KATHLEEN RHEM

American Forces Press Service

■ WASHINGTON — Thanks to a recent change, authorized customers can now bring guests in while they shop at most commissaries.

Under the policy, identification cards are checked at the checkout lane instead of the door. This still limits purchases to authorized customers. Visitors are not allowed to purchase commissary goods, officials said, and only visitors accompanied by an authorized shopper are allowed in a store. Commissary officials maintain the right to spot check for unauthorized people in their stores.

"The new visitors policy allows access to the benefit for patrons who otherwise might be inhibited from using what is rightly theirs," John F. McGowan said. McGowan is chief executive officer for the Defense Commissary Agency.

For instance, commissary officials said, shoppers have asked if they could bring in relatives visiting from out of town rather than making them wait in the car. DeCA had also heard from military spouses who found it difficult to use the commissary when they

provided home day care, officials said.

"This policy was established as an enhancement to the quality of life of our commissary patrons," DeCA spokesman Timothy C. Ford said. "Many patrons, both active duty and retired, have complained about having to leave a visiting mother, father, brother, niece, or other family member at home or waiting in a car while making routine grocery purchases."

"It also became increasingly difficult to justify not permitting visitor access to commissaries in cases where visitors are allowed in almost all other service or retail facilities on an installation," he said.

Commissary officials added that installation or higher-level commanders may still require ID checks for entry because the policy allows exceptions due to security concerns.

To date, about a dozen of the more than 300 commissaries worldwide still require ID checks at the door, Ford said.

"For example, commissaries working with local commanders in Okinawa, Japan, tried the new policy, but will return ID checks to the front doors in response to customer concerns," he said.

.... BAH from Page 1

greatest rate reductions, some grades as high as 26 percent.

"Unfortunately, the ones hardest hit by the decreases will be the newly assigned enlisted personnel in the grades of E-1 through E-4 at F.E. Warren and Minot," said Burling.

Also, other factors may cause a decrease in BAH rates, according to Rivera.

For example, if members are reassigned to a location where the housing costs are less than the current duty location; if the member's dependency status changes from "with" dependent to "without" dependent rate; or as a result of demotion. Additionally, a member who moves from a dorm to off-base housing will receive the new BAH rate.

Although the news may seem somewhat disappointing for some AFSPC members, the reality is that everyone will have the same average out-of-pocket expenses by grade and dependency status, including those who saw BAH increases.

"A significant feature of the new BAH program is regardless of where airmen are assigned, out-of-pocket expenses are equalized for every grade," said Rivera. "No matter where in the country the airmen moves, he or she will have the same out-of-pocket dollar amount within each grade and dependency status."

In enacting DoD's housing allowance, Congress intended to pay for approximately 85 percent of the national average housing cost for each grade, with the member paying 15 percent "out-of-pocket."

"However, current 'out-of-pocket' expenses are estimated around 20 percent," Rivera said. "Our near-term objective is to obtain additional funding that will permit us to further reduce the out-of-pocket expense down to 15 percent. Our long-term objective is to secure funding and support to ultimately zero-out all out of pocket expenses."

The new BAH program, which replaced the Variable Housing Allowance, is intended to provide uniformed service members housing compensation based on comparable civilian costs of housing. BAH is based on rental costs by pay grade, dependency status, and location. It's designed as a partial reimbursement to assist service members and their families in affording suitable off-base housing.

The BAH program was originally being implemented through a six-year transition period. However, the Fiscal

2000 National Defense Authorization Act authorized DoD to complete the transition in January 2000 instead of 2003.

Following the transition, housing allowances will vary geographically so the typical member of each pay grade will have the same out-of-pocket dollar amount at all locations. For any given individual, actual out-of-pocket expense will be greater or lower than the typical, based on their actual choice of housing.

According to Rivera, some key improvements of the housing allowance program include a cost-based system that is more efficient and responsive to the growing housing costs than the previous system. The new BAH methodology also ended the creeping growth in members' out-of-pocket expenses. Another change is the elimination of annual housing surveys and variable housing allowance offset.

"The VHA offset was a negative incentive since it authorized finance offices to recoup a portion of the allowance when individuals did not use their full housing allowance," said Rivera. "In addition, we got rid of the annual requirement to provide a copy of the lease or rental agreement to the finance office."

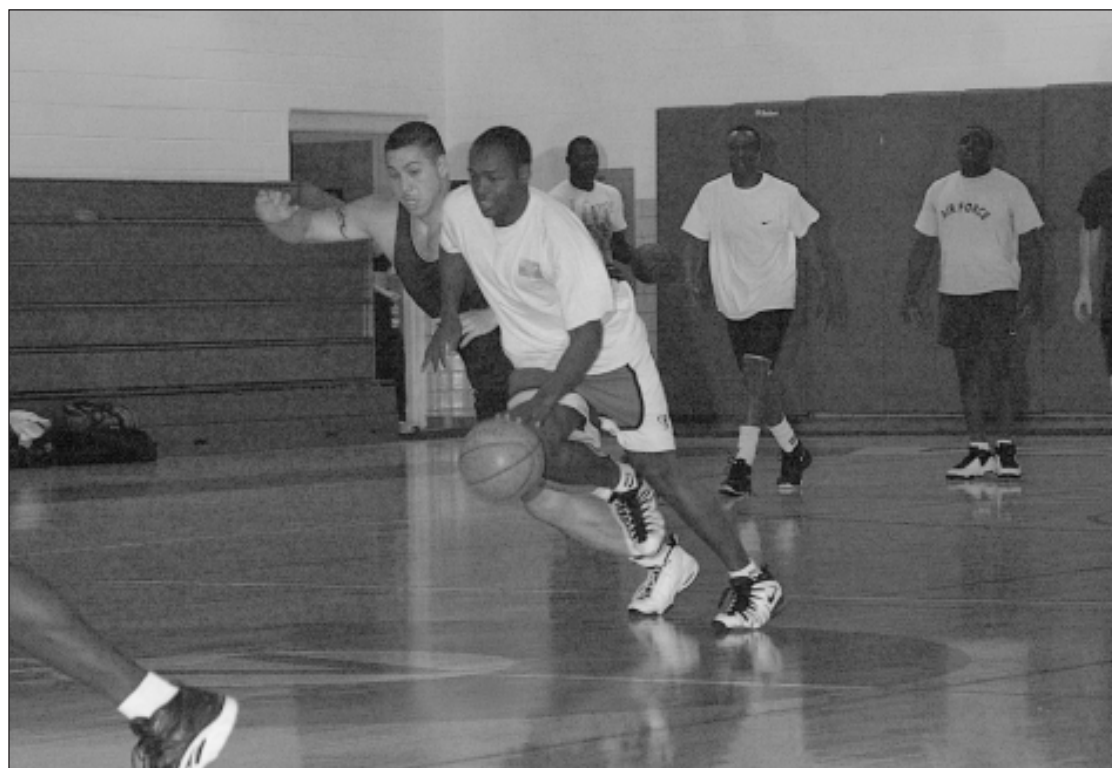
"A key factor of the old and new housing allowance methodologies remains our commitment to ensure that the typical service member of a given grade and dependency status will not be penalized – or rewarded – for assignment to a high or low housing cost area."

"Rate protection for our people in place before Dec. 31, 1999 is a big plus," said Burling. "They have already entered into lease agreements or home mortgages based on the 1999 BAH rates. They will not lose money. Therefore, our focus should be notifying inbound personnel of the rate changes prior to those folks entering leases or mortgage contracts."

Burling added that commanders, supervisors, and sponsors of incoming personnel should emphasize the new BAH rates, especially in locations with significant change.

"Commanders should also communicate with their local Chambers of Commerce, realtor associations, and civic leaders on the BAH changes," he said.

For specific BAH rates, service members can visit the Per Diem web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/rateinfo.html>.



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS DAVE CLOWER

Tip-off time

Andre Hope pushes the ball upcourt against Kevin James during lunchtime basketball Thursday. The Vandenberg intramural basketball season begins Monday. The men's varsity basketball team takes on Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Air Station, Calif., Jan. 22 at 2 p.m. and Jan. 23 at 10 a.m. in the main gym.

Air Force loses to Wofford 51-50

■ SPARTANBURG, SC - Tyron Wright's basketball homecoming was not what he had hoped for as a large contingent of family and friends watch the Falcons lose to Wofford College 51-50 Wednesday night.

The loss was Air Force's fourth road defeat of the young season and left them with a 4-7 overall mark.

Wright, whose hometown of Columbia is just 90 minutes southeast from Wofford, had a chance to win the game in the last second when he grabbed a rebound off a Jarvis Croff missed shot. It appeared that he was fouled on his layup attempt as the buzzer went off, but the officials called the game over.

"It came down to a call at the end of the game," said head coach Reggie Minton. "When you are playing on the road, you don't want it to come down to that. I thought he was fouled, but we just didn't get the call."

Croff kept the Falcons in

the game as he scored a game-high 25 points. The Falcons trailed by six points, 36-30, with just under 12 minutes left to play. Croff then scored five points on a seven to zero run to give Air Force their first lead of the game, 37-30 with 8:28 left.

Wofford's Ian Chadwick, the Terriers' leading scorer on the season, put Wofford on top with just over two minutes left to play when he hit a three-point basket to make it 49-48. He scored the final two points of the game when he hit two free throws with just 1:11 remaining in the game. Wright finished the game with just seven points, going three for 13 from the field.

Air Force never had the lead in the first half and trailed by as many as eight points twice. The last time came at the 10:31 mark as Wofford's Rashane DeLoach scored on a layup to make it 16-8. The Falcons battled back to tie the game at the half, 22-22 thanks to Croff's efforts. He hit two

consecutive three points and then a layup off a fastbreak with just nine seconds left to knot the score.

Croff, who entered the game as the team's leading scorer with a 19.3 point-per-game average, had 12 points at the half, going five for 10 from the field.

The Falcons shot just 33 percent from the field (10-30) at the halfway point compared to Wofford's 44 percent shooting (10-23). Air Force had one more rebound than the Terriers 17 to 16 at the half. The Falcons lost the services of Byron Nicholson early in the first half when he left the game with a separated left shoulder. The injury is expected to keep him sidelined for at least three weeks.

Next up on the Falcons' schedule is Denver University Monday in Clune Arena. The contest is the final tune-up before Beginning Mountain West Conference action. The Falcons' first conference game is against UNLV Wednesday.

Rediscover healthy living during Healthy Weight Week Jan. 17-23

PROVIDED BY FOUNDATION HEALTH
FEDERAL SERVICES

■ Is reaching a healthy weight your New Year's resolution again? By the third week of January, diets are dumped, rebound binges are over, and people are looking for ways to get the whole family back on track again.

Take time to celebrate Healthy Weight Week, Jan. 17 through Jan. 23, with activities that promote healthy lifestyle habits and prevent the onset of weight and eating problems.

The following healthy weight tips are provided to help you celebrate Healthy Weight Week:

- ◆ Make your resolution for life. Resolve to stop dieting, stop focusing on weight and stop weight-obsessive thoughts. Decide if it's time to get on with living your life to the fullest and forgo "waiting

to be thin."

- ◆ Rediscover normal eating. Eat at regular times, typically three meals and snacks to satisfy hunger. Respond to your body's internal signs of hunger and fullness – eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full. Notice how much better you feel!

- ◆ Live actively in your own way each day. Focus on the pleasure of movement and its health and energy benefits, not calories burned. Don't overdo it, or you won't continue. Find a comfortable level at activities you enjoy, and maybe you'll keep it up all year.

- ◆ Relieve stress. Take 10 to 15 minutes in your busy day, each day, to relax and relieve stress. Use a relaxation technique, or just empty your mind and let your body go limp. Taking 30-second

relaxation breaks will help too.

- ◆ Focus more on internal issues. Be aware that your level of self-esteem, life satisfaction and other personal issues may be causing you to over-eat or eat poorly. Use positive self-talk to increase self-respect, trust, esteem, acceptance of yourself and your body.

- ◆ Challenge size prejudice. Respect people of all sizes and appreciate their diversity. Reassure others that health, beauty and strength comes in all sizes!

- ◆ Participate in events that focus on healthy lifestyle choices.

For more information on Healthy Weight Week and how to reach and maintain a healthy weight, contact Healthy Weight Journal at (701) 567-2646 or visit their website at

www.healthyweight.net.

Don't lose sight of glaucoma, get eye exams

PROVIDED BY FOUNDATION HEALTH
FEDERAL SERVICES

■ Fifty million Americans are at risk for vision loss from glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness in the United States. Are you one of them? If you are, do you know how to reduce your risk of blindness? To determine how much you know about glaucoma, ask yourself the following questions.

Question: Does glaucoma tend to run in families?

Answer: Yes. Although glaucoma tends to run in families, a hereditary basis has not been established. If someone in your immediate family has glaucoma, you should have your eyes examined through dilated pupils at least every two years.

Question: Can a person have glaucoma and not know it?

Answer: Yes. The early stages of open-angle glaucoma, the most common form, usually have no warning signs. As the disease progresses, a person with glaucoma may notice their

vision gradually fading.

Question: Are people over 60 more likely to get glaucoma?

Answer: Yes. Everyone over 60 has an increased risk for glaucoma. Other groups at an increased risk include African Americans over 40 and people with a family history of the disease.

Question: Is eye pain a symptom of glaucoma?

Answer: No. People with glaucoma usually do not experience pain.

Question: Can glaucoma be controlled?

Answer: Yes. Glaucoma cannot be cured, however, eye drops or pills, conventional surgery or laser surgery can usually control it. Sometimes eye care professionals will recommend a combination of surgery and medication.

Question: Is glaucoma caused by increased eye pressure?

Answer: Yes. In glaucoma, for reasons still not completely understood, fluid drains too

slowly out of the eye. As the fluid builds up, the pressure inside the eye rises. Unless this pressure is controlled, it may cause damage to the optic nerve and other parts of the eye and loss of vision.

Question: Can vision lost from glaucoma be restored?

Answer: No. Vision lost from glaucoma is permanent. With early detection and treatment, the progression of visual loss can be slowed, or halted, and the risk of blindness reduced.

Question: Does a complete glaucoma exam consist only of measuring eye pressure?

Answer: No. A measurement of eye pressure, though an important part of an eye exam, is by itself not sufficient for detection. Glaucoma is detected most often during an eye examination through dilated pupils, which allows the doctor to see more of the inside of the eye to check for signs of glaucoma. A visual field test should also be performed.



JOHN PELAY

Happy New Year!

New Year's Eve revelers ring in the New Year at the Pacific Coast Club during the club's New Year's Eve 2,000 Pennies Celebration.

8

SAT.

■ There will be a **community benefit barbecue**

Saturday at 11 a.m. at the Longs Drug Store parking lot, 2116 S. Broadway in Santa Maria to support the Schwark and Wickham families who were devastated by fires on Christmas Day. There will be several community organizations on hand to help these families. For more information on the event or to help these families, contact Ed Conway at 606-9619.

9

SUN.

■ Starting Sunday, the base chapel is kicking off a **singles ministry** with a video series at Chapel One from 5 to 7 p.m. Food and drinks will be provided. For more information call 606-8270.

10

MON.

■ The community support center will hold a **newcomer's spouse orientation** meeting Monday at 7:45 a.m. in the Pacific Coast Club. The meeting provides an

opportunity for spouses to meet other spouses in the area and learn about the Vandenberg community. There will be a spouse break-out group that meets at 9:50 a.m. For more information call 606-0801.

11

TUE.

■ A **support group for single parents** will be held Tuesday at 11 a.m. in the Pacific Coast Club. For more information on the group call Linda Bastine at 606-9958.

12

WED.

■ The **Bear Essentials parenting class** begins

Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the aerospace medicine building. The 12-week class focuses on parenting children from pregnancy to adolescence. For more information call 606-9958 or 606-5338.

13

THUR.

■ The community support center is holding an

anger management course starting Thursday at 2 p.m. The eight-week course meets each Thursday at the health and wellness center. It is designed to help people manage anger in a healthy and productive manner. For more information call 606-9958 or 606-5338.

19

WED.

■ The community support center is holding a

workshop on **marketing yourself for a new career** at 9 a.m. The day-long course is recommended for people with more than 15 years time in service, or for those people who plan on separating in the near future. The class discusses financial preparation, career change stressors, the current labor market and job searching techniques. For more information on the workshop call Jimmy Camacho at 606-0039.

22

SAT.

■ The community support center is holding a

two-day workshop Jan. 22 and Jan. 29 on the **pathways of youth**. The workshop is designed to improve high school kids' self-management skills, self-esteem, goal setting, and establishing and keeping a good self image. For more information on the class call Jimmy Camacho at 606-0039.

8

TUE.

■ The **National Day of Prayer Luncheon** is

11:30 a.m., Feb. 8 at the Pacific Coast Club. The guest speaker for the event is Chaplain (Col.) David Park, Air Force Space Command chaplain. For more information call Chaplain (Capt.) John Shipman at 606-8270.

MOVIES

Friday

Bringing out the Dead (R) Starring Nicolas Cage and Ving Rhames. 110 min.

Saturday

3 p.m. -- Pok'emon (G) 75 min.

7:30 p.m. -- Fight Club (R) Starring Brad Pitt and Edward Norton. 139 min.

Sunday

Fight Club (R)